

male or female members as contracting or expanding when connected together. Further, by disclosing a dovetail joint in Fig. 9, including a flaring tenon and a corresponding mortise, Suzuki strongly suggests joining the male and female members in the conventional manner, namely, by aligning the tenon above and then sliding the tenon into the mortise. Suzuki clearly fails to disclose the bobbin segments as employing a snap coupling, nor could the dovetail joint shown in Fig. 9 be used as such.

Similarly, the Examiner appears to suggest that Sato's projections and depressions 10/9 constitute a snap coupling because these features are formed from a resin material. As also noted by the Examiner, however, Sato fails to disclose the projections and depressions 10/9 as deforming or snap coupling to one another when joined. Moreover, Figure 1 of Sato makes clear that no such deforming or snap coupling is necessary or even possible for joining a projection 10 with an adjacent depression 9. On the contrary, Sato merely discloses a trapezoidal projection 10 and a matching depression 9. Such a design will align two of Sato's iron core segments in a radial direction, but will not snap couple the two segments together. Sato's trapezoidal projection and recess are simply an alignment tool rather than a means for snap coupling and holding two parts together.

For these reasons, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the §102 rejections of independent claims 24, 34, 44 and 59, and claims 26-27, 29, 46 and 48-49 which depend therefrom.